

The CW test requirement for all classes of licensees should be dropped at the earliest convenient date. There are several reasons why this should be done. The primary reason for the need to know Morse Code no longer exists in modern radio communications. Second Morse Code has grown incompatible with the sections 97.1(b), 97.1(c), and 97.1(d) in section 97, i.e. "Basis and Purpose" for the very existence of the Amateur Radio Service. Finally Morse Code proficiency can NOT be guaranteed pasted the initial test.

The only logical and reasonable argument for the requirement for Morse Code proficiency disappeared when the last United States government run station quit using it. Morse Code was a reasonable requirement when Amateurs shared frequencies with government stations, and the real need to communicate between government and Amateur stations to efficiently coordinate the use of the then available spectrum. This was a sound and logical requirement at that time when the vast majority of communications was carried out using Morse Code. However today those same government communications are handled by voice or some advance form of Digital transmission.

We can't forget the following points as outlined by the FCC stating WHY the Amateur Radio Service exists at all.

97.1(b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to continue to the advancement of the radio art.

To continue testing for a specific mode that by all accounts is disappearing from wide usage does not make sense. If the radio art is to advance then by necessity some modes will decline in main stream usage, like Morse Code by government and commercial interests, or disappear altogether. After all when was the last time somebody had to prove they could ride a horse when most everybody really needs to learn how to drive a car.

97.1(c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateurs service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communications and technical phases of the art.

Morse Code proficiency is not advancing a skill in communications, it is in fact an old skill, and little changed from the time of its invention. How can one legitimately claim that sending Morse Code using a straight key, also invented at about the same time, as advancing technical phases of the art? If Morse Code was such a great advance then we should all be using pocket sized CW transceivers instead of out Nextel cell phones.

97.1(d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service trained operators, technicians, and electronic experts.

You can have trained operators, but trained in old technology Morse Code. Or you can have trained operators that are up to speed on the newest digital methods. By requiring Morse Code specific testing the current message is clear, the emphasis is on old technology.

Much has been made of the argument that Morse Code tested Amateurs are available to assist during emergency communications, and testing is necessary to guarantee this. This reasoning flies in the face of the current testing and licensing reality. Currently any Morse Code tested Amateur can renew his/her license, with in the renewal period, without having to take any test. This means, for example a 15 year old Amateur, could renew their license until 80 years of age, if they live that long, and never having to prove to anyone if they can still send Morse

Code. Many Amateurs will admit that they learned Morse Code to gain access to HF for their own reasons, and had no desire to ever use Morse Code for anything. So the current real situation is we have a large group of Morse Code tested Amateurs many of whom probably can't even copy their own callsign in Morse Code due to many years of non use. This certainly isn't an idea the pro Morse Code advocates wouldn't like you to think too hard about because it destroys their logic for retaining Morse Code testing. Also consider that when you renew your driver's license you get to take that little test. As simple as it is at least the secretary of state understands the need to test people to gage their skill level.

In general I do support the consolidation of several of the license classes. With the removable of Morse Code testing several of the current license classes just don't make sense anymore.

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